

First student eSports tournament hits London with PlayStation's backing

Digital Schoolhouse, powered by PlayStation, has launched an eSports Tournament designed to inspire students by exposing them to careers within the video games, eSports and creative industries. Taking place on Tuesday 4 April at the Gfinity London Arena, the eSports Tournament Grand Final will see 12 of the 400 schoolchildren from across the country who have taken part in the tournament engaging with computing and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) subjects through a Rocket League battle on PlayStation 4! The Grand Final will form part of the London Games Festival (30 March-9 April), a new programme which has been designed to support, grow and promote the video games and interactive entertainment sectors.

Using the medium of video games, participating students have been introduced to a new world of career opportunities – those emerging within the UK's vibrant eSports sector. Competing for a place at the eSports Tournament Grand Final, which will be hosted by Gfinity, schools from Dewsbury, Swindon, Walsall and Eastbourne have been partaking in regional heats by playing Rocket League with their peers on the PlayStation 4. The winning teams from each school will be heading to Digital Schoolhouse's eSports Tournament Grand Final for an immersive experience in the world of eSports and video games, where the victor will be crowned and all students will come away with a greater understanding of the exciting opportunities that this rapidly-evolving sector presents.

This tournament has been designed not only to engage children with computing and STEAM subjects in a fun and interactive way, but also to tackle misconceptions surrounding these industries. By encouraging more girls to take up computing and STEAM subjects, and by raising children's awareness of the growing variety of careers that are available in the creative digital sector, the Grand Final is sure to inspire all participants to see video games as more than 'just a bit of fun'. With 99 per cent of 8-15-year-olds regularly playing computer games, it's important to capture their enthusiasm for them and demonstrate how this can be used to develop valuable 21st Century skills and, potentially, fuel careers in the creative digital sector.

Shahneila Saeed, programme director for Digital Schoolhouse, said: "The eSports Tournament Grand Final will expose students to the increasing breadth of new careers

available within the video games industry by immersing them in the exciting world of eSports. It is a careers event with a difference! By raising awareness of these sectors and their associated careers, we hope to inspire the next generation to consider creative digital and STEAM careers and to help them develop their digital literacy. We want to confront misconceptions about computing and technology, such as that it's 'too techy' to understand or that it's not appealing to girls, by giving students a range of unique experiences, both inside and outside the classroom. By bringing innovation from industry into the classroom, we can help students to understand the digital world around them in ways they've not experienced before."

If you're interested in attending Digital Schoolhouse' eSports Tournament Grand Final, contact Shahneila Saeed on shahneila@ukie.org.uk. You can also keep up-to-date with the tournament and Grand Final on Twitter@ #DSHesports.

About Digital Schoolhouse

The not-for-profit Digital Schoolhouse programme, powered by PlayStation®, uses play-based learning to engage the next generation of pupils and teachers with the new Computing curriculum. Digital Schoolhouse is delivered by the UK games industry trade body Ukie, and was originally seed funded by the Mayor of London's London Schools Excellence Fund (LSEF).

Each Digital Schoolhouse is based in a school, college or university environment, and aims to work with a growing network of local primary and secondary teachers to deliver creative and cross-curricular computing lessons using play-based learning. Through this, it supports the new Computing programme of study for the national curriculum in a way that leaves pupils and teachers feeling inspired about, and engaged with, computing and the wider creative digital industries.

The workshops put theory into practice and help teachers embed it with ongoing personalised support and continuing professional development (CPD). The programme has been accurately described as a 'bridge between education and industry' – and a good one at that.

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